

College of Education Graduate Tracer Study (GTS): Boon or Bane?

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doi: 10.19044/esj.2016.v12n16p63 [URL:http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n16p63](http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n16p63)

Abstract

This study traced the employment profile of Cebu Technological University, Main Campus-College of Education (CTU MC CoE) graduates, from 2005-2009. Mix methods of descriptive survey method and thematic analysis were used to trace their status of employment, with the use of questionnaire and personal interviews. Data were analyzed of simple percentages and chi-square for significance of relationship. Illuminating were extrapolated and numbered. It aimed to: ascertain the profile of graduates; determine a relationship between their present occupation and the course they finished; and identify the cooperating industries/institution that employed BEEd and BSEd graduates. The CTU MC CoE graduates were proven to proficient and competent to be employable in the government schools as revealed in the 7 illuminating themes, thus resulted in boon opportunities. High school teachers predominate on the track than the elementary teachers with a negligible difference. The CTU mandate, as cascaded in its vision-mission, prepared graduates for the field of work, with personality that matters compared than other predetermined factors. Academic preparation and career performance exhibited signification of successful teaching employment in the public school.

Keywords: Tracer study, employment status, academic preparation, curriculum standards

Introduction

The value of a higher education is measured in its capacity to open doors to the graduates for future employment and the establishment of their sustainable career path. The process that a college student undergoes in a

higher education institution does not only hone and develop his or her capacities; but also to prepare him or her to become productive citizen and dignified member of society. Responding to global demands, the Philippines is now trying to cope with internationalization in education: curricular offerings are realigned for outcomes-based education (OBE); retraining teachers to teach the 21st century skills for ‘Generation Y and Z’ learners – the millennials, who are borne to be digital natives; finding better authentic assessment strategies; and redirecting focus with the use of technology.

In a developing nation like the Philippines, a higher education is mostly viewed as an investment and as a means of furthering on a status of an individual in the most basic institution of a family. Filipino parents labor a lot to set aside their monthly income for the education of their children. Other parents engage in a lot of loans, be it in the bank or in loan sharks, debts among friends, and selling some of their properties; while some college students are engaging in part time jobs in fast food chains, in order to graduate for a certain degree. Tight situations are what most Filipino families experience when it comes on paying the tuition fees during mid-term and final exams; but the attitudes of the Filipino youths to earn a profession is highly steadfast and admirable, which reflects their parents’ expectations to become a full-fledged professional.

It is not surprising therefore that employability and ‘demand’ of a certain profession is a huge factor in the choice of degrees. Consequently, one of the main goals of a higher education institution is also based on the premise that graduates may continually adapting the needs of a highly-evolving and competitive ‘market’, as they serve as ‘factory’, a breeding ground for professionals and employees of industries in the future. This scenario remains an ongoing challenge among education stakeholders in the Philippines since then.

To prove this context, many young professionals shift many times their jobs because of mismatch and low salaries of the first profession they finished in a university. In order to find a breather of their uncomfortable economic life, Inocian, de los Reyes, Lasala, Pacaña, and Dawa (2015) conclude that these professionals take up 18 units in Professional Education (DPE) in order to take the Licensure Examinations (LET) for them to be accepted in the public school system. They go through with this process as prescribed by government under RA 7836 provisions.

The Cebu Technological University has continually provided her students the opportunities and the resources to equip them of the necessary skills and expertise to be able to competently face the challenges of employment and career growth. By virtue of RA 9744, Cebu Technological University is mandated to train high skilled professionals to respond the industry and technology needs of companies and other sectors.

As regards, the College of Education in Cebu Technological University-Main Campus (CTU- MC) conducts a Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) that evaluates factors affecting and contributing the status of employment of graduates upon the mandate of the Commission of Higher Education (CHED, 2006). As defined by Verona (2011), a tracer study is method which is basically envisioned to trace graduates of an academic institution, in order to provide feedback mechanism of the graduates and their alma mater. This establishes the connection of the quality of graduates of universities and colleges shaped by their standards of curriculum and instruction imposed by CHED on them.

The study hopes to provide a useful tool in determining the quality of the College of Education programs in CTU, vis-à-vis, the graduates' employment status, which can further facilitate understanding, regarding the degree graduates' motivations, as a contributing factor in finding a successful employment opportunities. The study also provides relevant information to educational planners and policy makers, in assisting their decision making to improve their programs, in meeting the country's high-level and highly skilled human resources.

Related Literatures

Internationalization of education is one of the most pressing need establish a network of best practices to ensure quality education. Rosaroso, Dakay and Sarmiento (2015) support this claim based on their model dubs as "HEI Strategy Formulation Framework" to ensure the institution's core functions of instruction, research, and extension. This model can establish a mechanism of quality assurance, which consequently affects the quality of graduations that most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) aspire.

The success of the nation depends on the quality of graduates higher education institutions have produced. In Nigeria, Fadeyi, Sofoluwe, and Gbadeyan (2015) mention that there is an impact of teachers' salary to their job performance, vis-à-vis to students' academic performance, which means the higher salary of the teachers can boost their morale to perform better in teaching. Maximum employability among their graduates is one of the effects of this argument. And to document it empirically is through an effective system of the graduate tracer studies.

The Graduate Tracer Study of the University of Pangasinan reveals that new graduates are challenged by the lack of job opportunities, which reasonably takes them a longer time to wait because of lack of experience (Rocaberte, 2016). This is supported by Verona (2011) that government needs to reckon on issues regarding labor mismatch – a situation where the aggregate supply of labor skills is insufficient to address the decline in productive labor, more especially in urban or semi-urban area.

This scenario connects the study of Wangchuk (2002) that generally most graduates in teacher education are hired in urban or semi-urban areas than in the rural areas in Paro. This means comforts for better life are found in urbanite city than in rural areas. Signals in the use of technology for instructional purposes like the use of social media and multi-media presentations can be accessed more readily in the city.

Ramirez, Cruz and Alcantara (2014) argue that it is no longer sufficient for new graduates to have knowledge because most industries today need applicants who are capable to perform the job. Companies need highly skilled graduates in order to be competent. This implies that universities must shift their instructional competence to train students who are outcomes-based, so that they can survive in the world of work relative on the respective careers they have chosen.

Aquino and Punongbayan (2015) conclude that in the recently conducted tracer study of the University of Batangas among their Education graduates, majority who participated in are graduates of the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED), who believe that teaching is the most rewarding and challenging profession.

Objectives of the Study

This study determined the employability and the status of employment of CTU-MC's College of Education graduates in both BEED and BSED programs, within the academic years of 2005-2006 and 2008-2009 based on CHED Memorandum Order 11, series 1999. It sought to answer these objectives to: ascertain the profile of the graduates in terms of their obtained degrees; the graduates' socio-economic background as regards to employment rate and status of graduates; categories of the occupational groups that they perform; ways on how graduates find their present job; factors that enabled them to get their first job; determine a relationship between their present occupation and the course they finished; and identify the cooperating industries/academic institutions that employed BEED and BSED graduates.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

The study utilized mix methods of descriptive survey using thematic analysis, which covered the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) degrees, from 2005-2006 and 2008-2009 graduates of Cebu Technological University, Main Campus College of Education (CTU-MC CoE). In ascertaining the status of this tracer study, the descriptive method of research was used. Illuminating themes were extrapolated and coded in order to flicker the data. Table 1

showed the distribution of graduates and respondents and the corresponding response rate, which showed that the average respondents of BEEd and BSEd graduates were 351, with 37.46% response rate.

Table I. Research Respondents and Research Rate

COURSE	NUMBER OF GRADUATES					NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS					RESPONSE RATE
	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL	
BEEd	131	120	105	117	473	28	55	48	27	158	33.40%
BSEd	109	151	98	106	464	25	66	54	48	193	41.59%
TOTAL	240	271	203	223	937	53	121	102	75	351	37.46%

Research Instrument

The gathering of data was conducted for three months, enough to encourage more respondent participation. A questionnaire was patterned from the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) standardized form and was approved for adoption for use by the Office of the College of Education, after that this has been piloted. The questionnaire comprised the following itemized categories: (a) General Information; (b) Educational Background; (c) Training(s)/Advance Studies attended after college; and (d) Employment Data.

Data Gathering Procedure

A close supervision and guidance to selected Student Teachers who were assigned to gather and collate the obtained data. The First Batch of the 2012-2013 Student Teachers were given the tasked to field the questionnaire and conducted personal interviews specifically to those Education graduates of batch 2006 to 2009 of CTU-MC CoE under the Supervision of the Associate Dean of the College.

Treatment of Data

The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis, with simple frequencies through the use of percentage and chi-square (χ^2) formula in determining the significance of the relationship.

Findings and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

The Cebu Technological University, Main Campus offers a vast array of academic degrees. The College of Education offers two undergraduate degree programs like the: Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) and the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) who graduated from 2006 until 2009. These graduates of these two degrees were the main focus in the study, in order to propose policy guidelines and recommendations to ensure quality assurance and effective delivery system.

Figure 1 Respondents of the study according to course taken (N=351)

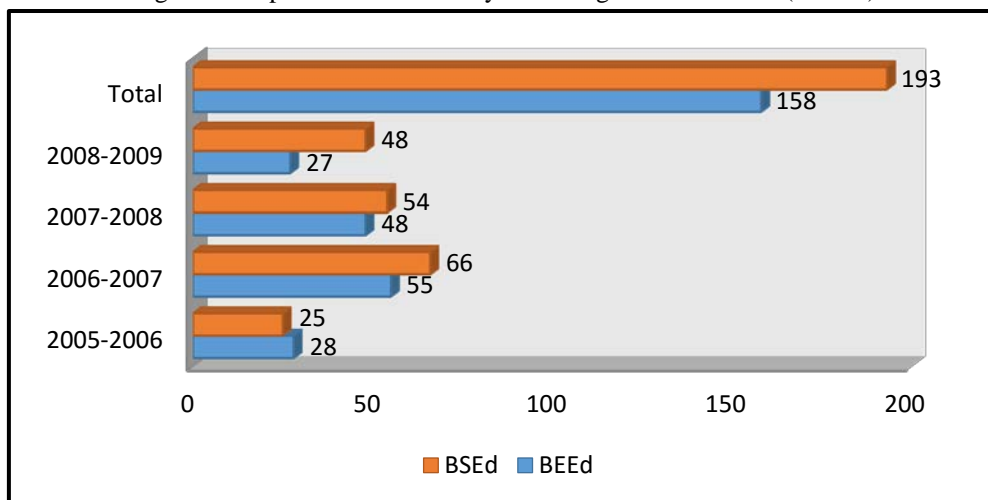


Figure 1 shows the greater edge of the number of graduates in the Bachelor of Secondary Education than the Bachelor of Elementary Education. This complements one of the findings of the tracer study conducted in University of Pangasinan that Secondary Education graduates are the most sought programs for employment (Rocaberte, 2016). With the current implementation of the Senior High, BSED graduates are the preferential experts to teach the spiral curriculum in most content, specialized and contextualized course, by virtue of RA 10533 provisions.

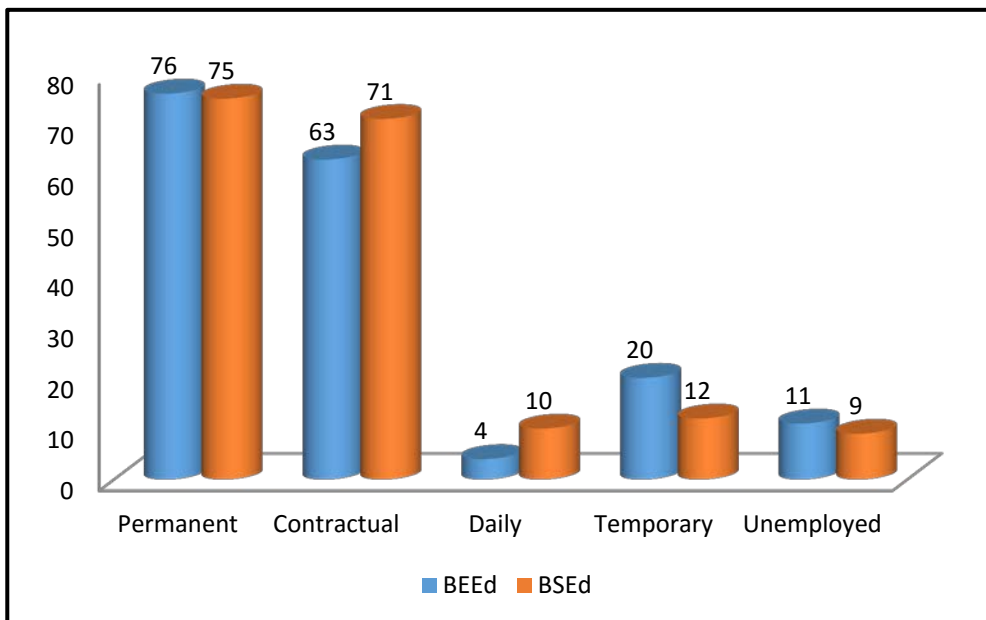
Theme 1: Future High School Teachers Predominate on Track

As reflected in Figure 1, out of 351 respondents, majority of the graduates come from the Bachelor of Secondary Education with a total of 193 or 54.99 %, who mostly belong from batch 2006-2007 with 66 respondents. This means that science and technology courses create attraction in the selection of degree course at the moment students enroll at CTU-MC CoE, more especially in the offering of the Technical and Vocational (TechVoc), Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, and Mathematics (STEAM) tracks, in the Senior High School. This trend also justifies the CTU mandate (RA 9744, sec. 2), evidence that the college of Education has fulfilled its mission and vision as a technology teacher training institution. As Inocian (2013) rejoins the vision-mission of the university reflects the future of the university and shapes the quality of her graduates.

Employment Rate and Status of Graduates

The quality of education offered by an institution can be determined on the employability of its graduates, i.e. the ability of the graduates to land a job after graduation. The comparison of the respondents according to its employment rate and status is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure II. Employment Rate and Status (N= 351)



Theme 2: The Search for New Employment Begins

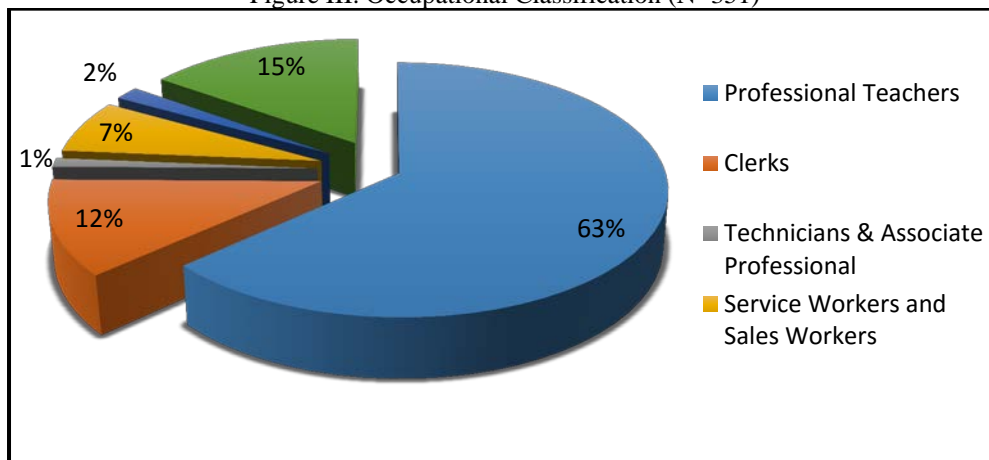
As disclosed in Figure 2, majority of the respondents from batch 2006 to 2009 were employed on a permanent basis with 151 respondents or 43.02%, followed by those who are employed with contractual status, with 134 respondents or 33.18%. Furthermore, the figure shows that the employment rate of BEEd and BSEd graduates of 331 or 94.30% implies that the College of Education graduates are highly employable due to the industry driven curriculum that CTU administration and faculty designed, in fulfillment of the institution's vision and mission. According to the Labor Force survey of the National Statistics Office (NSO), college courses are subject to public perception, in terms of the availability of work, at a period of time. As of April 2010, the percentage of employment of the country has a record of employment rate of 92.7%, underemployment rate of 19.8%, and unemployment rate of 7.4%. This is attributed by a strong mandate of the Aquino administration to alleviate the status of the poor to achieve a better life through the conditional cash programs, state scholarship, and the corruption reduction in government (Ranario, 2012). Though there might be a slight increase in number on 2011 compared to 2010. The country's

employment crisis remains a constant problem in the succeeding year. Based on the October 2011 to October 2012 Labor Force Survey, the country's employment rate continues to drop from 93.6% to 93.2%, underemployment rate increased from 19.0% - 19.1%, as well as the unemployment rate with 6.4 to 6.8% (Philippine Statistics Report, 2012). As regards to teaching, CTU College of Education graduates get full-time and part-time employment because the learned skills match with what the schools actually needed in the field. The offering of the new curriculum, under the K to 12, has contributed to this result because of the additional teacher items opened by different school districts.

Profile of Graduates according to Occupational Groups

Figure 3 provides a general picture of the occupational classification of respondents. As shown in the pie chart, most of the employed CTU-MC CoE graduates are employed as professional teachers with 63%. This is followed by non-specified jobs 15%. The results show that most of the graduates are employed in jobs related to their course employed in college. With 63% employment status of new teachers carry the needed requirements of Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET results), interviews, demonstrations, seminars and trainings attended, and teaching experiences in the private schools. The CTU-MC CoE's graduates fulfill their leadership in terms of professional leadership and pedagogical knowledge (Inocian and Hermosa, 2014). The rest of the graduates are working in the petty jobs and in BPOs, while waiting their professional and legal requirements as an entry qualification to teach in the public school.

Figure III. Occupational Classification (N=351)



Theme 3: The Genesis of Teaching Novitiate

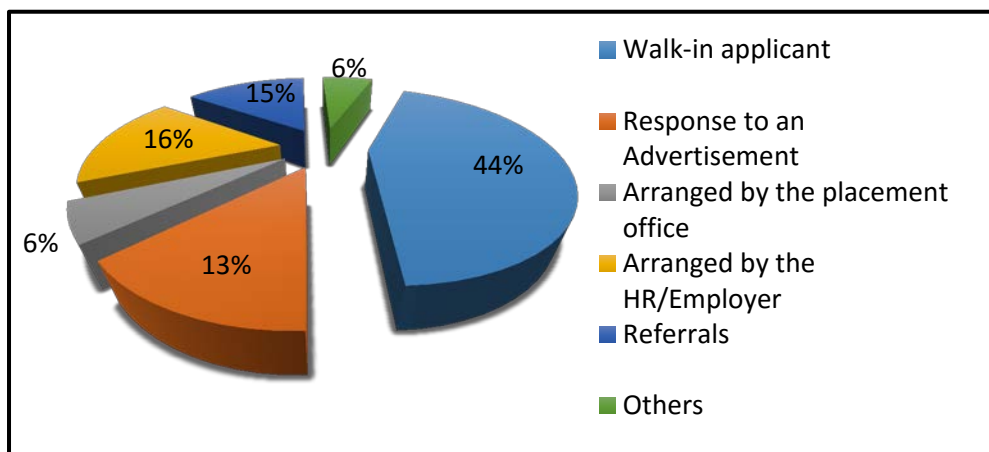
After passing the LET exams as provide in Republic Act 7836, CTU-MC CoE graduates initiate to march on the road of 3 to 5 years of teaching

novitiate. Being novice, these graduates undergo certain adjustments about their profession. They are expected to respond to a call of duty on their teaching assignment and struggling to drive the best on their teaching career (Inocian and Hermosa, 2014). On this adjustment stage, the rest who cannot survive in the novitiate periods shift to change a career and find attractive salaries, as clerks and other service workers, to add those who have no passion for teaching even if they are licensed teachers.

Profile of how graduates find jobs

Figure IV illustrates CTU-MC CoE graduates' job profiles. As reflected, they acquire their jobs as walk-in applicants with 44%. This is followed by jobs acquired through an arrangement with the HR/Employer with 16%. The least number of jobs is obtained through the efforts of the university's placement office with 6% only. This means that the teaching profession requires an applicant to seek for the job: write application letters, respond to interviews, conduct lesson demonstrations, and retrieve certifications papers relative to their profession. As regards, CTU- MC as an educational institution has never failed to produce graduates who have learned the actual application of the learning theories inside the classroom, as these are transferred into the real practice the moment they face their employers, during the actual teaching recruitment by the Department of Education (DepEd).

Figure IV. How Graduates Find their Job (N=351)



Theme 4: Job Seeking: The Struggle Continues

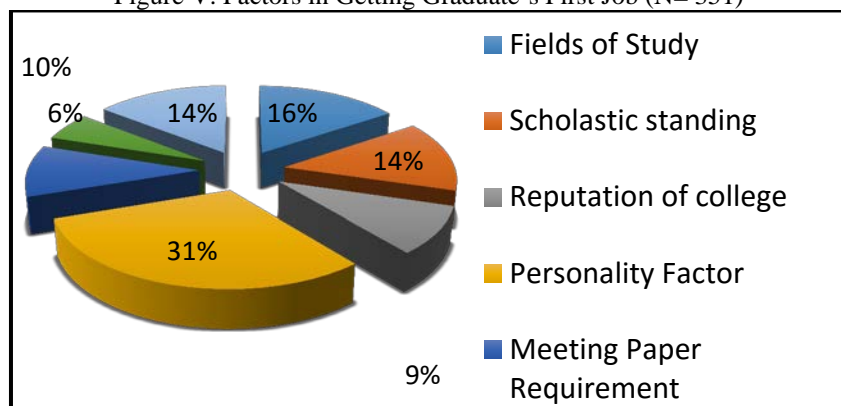
Finding a job after graduation is the main concern of graduates. Job seeking is a student's struggle to find life after graduation. It takes a moderate time for most graduated to land a job (Aquino and Punongbayan, 2015). It is observed that the job openings are not enough to accommodate

the graduates as they struggle to meet the minimum standard of employment. Furthermore, around half of the 2012 graduates struggle to find full-time jobs for many months after leaving the university if current employment trends continue (Doward, 2012). Hence, the result lends credence to the recommendation of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to colleges and universities which encourages them to put up placement offices, with the goal to provide graduates with the tools and skills they need to launch successful job searches that lead to career fulfillment. The said placement offices must be well-supported and enhanced by the colleges and universities in order to effectively perform its function. In the case of the CTU-MC CoE graduates, this reality is a struggle for those who have not passed the LET exams or those who made it but left no luck or no opportunities in the teaching profession, which 37% of them ended them to work in other related jobs.

Factors in Acquiring the First Job

It is a common predicament to most fresh graduates to be able to find first jobs that offer them experience necessary for further job transitions and career growth. This tries to establish the factors contributing to landing the first job. Figure 5 exemplifies that majority of the CTU-MC CoE graduates consider personality as the prime contributing factor that gives them an edge in obtaining their first job, with a 31% of the total respondents. This factor includes communication and human relations skills, as well as self-confidence. Relatively, the Fields of Study or specialization rank second with 16 %. The least contributing factor is on-the-job training experience with 6% of the total.

Figure V. Factors in Getting Graduate's First Job (N= 351)



Theme 5: Teaching as a Human Relations Act

Aquino and Punongbayan (2015) stress out that most stay in the teaching job because of communication and human relations skills embedded in the preparation of teacher education. With the 31% personality factor in

getting a teaching job implies the confluence of the holistic development of one's personality and academic performance, which becomes the foremost and revitalizing methods to be employed in the classroom. Learning activities are properly selected toward the proper formation of a well-rounded personality, concomitant with the non-negotiable academic standards of higher education. This means that good human relations matter a lot in teaching. Students learn a lot under the tutelage of an accommodating and exciting teacher. Brain-based learning principles support it that a happy classroom promotes better learning than a regimented one (Inocian and Lasala, 2014). Other factors like: scholastic standing and reputation of the school, and other factors have shown fewer significations in job acquisition.

The Relationship of Occupation and Course Graduated

This part provides the discussion on the significance of the relationship between the graduates' occupation and the degrees they finished. In consideration of the type of occupation of graduates who are employed as teachers, in business firms, and different enterprises, arbitrary scaling is utilized. The scaling gives three (3) points for those in teaching, two (2) points for those working in business corporations/incorporations, and one (1) point for other business enterprises. After which, the chi-square (χ^2) treatment was done. The null hypothesis sets at 0.05 level of significance is used, as reflected in in Table II.

Table II. Relationship between Occupation and Course Graduated

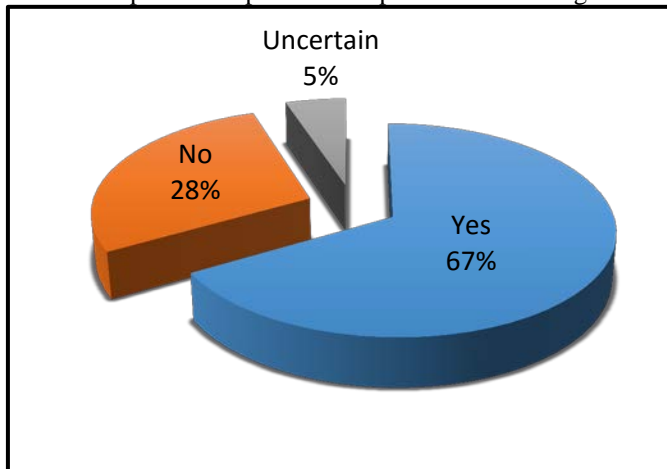
Correlation Between	Level of Significance	Critical (χ^2) Value	Computed (χ^2) value	Decision	Interpretation
Occupation and Course Graduated from	0.05	5.99	24.997	Reject H_0	Significant

Theme 6: Relevant College of Education Curriculum

Fadeyi, Sofoluwe and Gbadeyan (2015) believe that “the school can change the society for better through the agency of the teachers, but society has to first empower the teacher and enrich the climate of the school”. This argument recognizes the role of the teachers as a significant stakeholder in making the curriculum relevant to the students, who are school's future graduates. Table 2 reveals that the computed (χ^2) value 24.997, which is greater than the critical (χ^2) value of 5.99 sets at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between occupation and the course graduated, is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is a **significant** relationship between occupation and course graduated. It implies then that the CTU MC CoE teacher education degrees

are relevant; wherein 67.00 % of them are able to land a teaching, a year or two, right after graduation. Figure 6 provides evidence on the course and occupation relevance. Relevance of the CoE education curriculum is an indicator that CTU has a long way to maintain its program, as a vibrant technology education institution in Central Visayas. This is rejoined by Verona (2011) that today's employer requires prospective employers who are well-educated and exhibit the expertise they learn during their formal schooling in college.

Figure 6. Relationship between present occupation and course graduated (N= 351)



The data reveal that 67% of the CoE respondents have an occupation related to their finished degrees at CTU. Therefore, the courses offered in the College of Education are relevant and beneficial to the graduates in terms of gaining a stable employment.

Stakeholders Employing BEED and/or BSED Graduates

The match between stakeholders' manpower demands and the competencies and skills of applicants is vital to the employability of graduates. This study however is limited only in determining the stakeholders that accommodated BEED and BSED graduates at CTU Main Campus as reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Stakeholders that employed BEED and/or BSED graduates

Name of Stakeholder	Type of Employment	Number of Employed Graduates	Rank
DepEd Cebu City	Government	56	1
College Institutions	Private	49	2
Elementary Institutions	Private	35	3
High School Institutions	Private	26	4
DepEd Cebu Province	Government	13	5
DepEdLapu-Lapu City	Government	9	6
CTU- Main Campus Offices	Government	7	7
Vicsal Dev. Corporation	Private	5	8
National Statistics Office	Government	4	10
DepEdMandaue City	Government	4	10
Roble Shipping, Inc.	Private	4	10
Garces Realty	Private	3	12.5
Pharmacies	Private	3	12.5
Toyoflex Cebu Corporation	Private	2	17
Gaisano Capital South	Private	2	17
Sony Erickson Telecom	Private	2	17
Aegis People Support	Private	2	17
Mitsumi	Private	2	17
Coffee Shops	Private	2	17
SM Supermaket	Private	2	17
DepEdBogo City	Government	1	25.5
Local Government Units	Government	1	25.5
Dranix Distributor, Inc.	Private	1	25.5
Asia town, I.T. Park	Private	1	25.5
Chong Hua Hospital	Private	1	25.5
Marco Polo Plaza Cebu	Private	1	25.5
Lucky circle Corporation	Private	1	25.5
La Nueva Supermart	Private	1	25.5
SumistesuPhils., Inc.	Private	1	25.5
Betty's Bakeshop	Private	1	25.5

Theme 7: The Culmination of the Graduates' Colorful Journey

Table 3 reveals that the Department of Education (DepEd) of Cebu City, with 56 graduates, has employed the highest number of BEED and BSED graduates, followed by the different Private College Institutions, which hire CoE graduates. The government sector emerges as the main employer of teacher education courses. It is evident that strong academic linkages and partnerships with government and private sectors are deemed important and must be continually enhanced in order to improve the employability of graduates. This shows strong relations between CTU, MC CoE management with DepEd management, in terms of deployment of student teachers. Once these student teachers are found to be good, the moment they come back applying for permanent teacher items, then they

have an edge to be accepted compared than those who have their student teaching practicum with them, with more exposure and probability to be hired compared than teaching in the private schools. Teaching in the private schools only happens when the graduates are still waiting for the release of their LET results.

Conclusion

The CTU-MC CoE graduates were proven to proficient and competent to be employable in the government schools, as revealed in the 7 illuminating themes, thus resulted in boon opportunities. High school teachers predominate on the track than the elementary teachers with a negligible difference. The CTU mandate, as cascaded in its vision-mission, prepared graduates for the field of work, with personality that matters compared than other predetermined factors. Academic preparation and career performance exhibited signification of successful teaching employment in the public school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that: (1) the CTU MC CoE may strengthen its linkages in the field of education in identifying the skills and competencies that students must learn in order to meet the manpower requirements, (2) the methods employed in classroom activities and other venues must be geared towards developing well-rounded personalities of students, concomitant with academic quality standards, (3) the placement services may initiate more activities in enhancing the students' capabilities and readiness into job markets in order to facilitate better employability, and (4) ongoing research should be initiated within the context of graduate follow-up.

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